

## **HARROGATE CONVENTION CENTRE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **Introduction**

We aim to provide excellent service to all our customers. If we get something wrong, we want to try to put it right quickly and learn from the mistake to help improve services in the future.

This policy sets out how we define complaints and how we will respond to them, including the different stages a complaint would go through, the timescales involved and who handles and responds to the complaint.

### **The process**

When looking into a complaint we will try to:-

- deal with complaints fairly, objectively and professionally;
- resolve complaints without avoidable delay;
- use the information from complaints to help us to improve our services;
- maintain records of (and report on) complaints for monitoring and public accountability.

### **What is a complaint?**

HCC recognises and accepts complaints. It might be about:-

- failure to deliver a service;
- a delay in providing a service;
- unsatisfactory quality of a service;
- the behaviour of a member of our staff; and/or
- the failure of a member of our staff in following HCC policy.

### **How to make a complaint**

We encourage you to make a complaint personally to our venue staff as soon as possible after the incident, ideally whilst you are still at the venue, because it is easier to gather relevant information at the time and to avoid repeated incidents.

When you are contacting us about your complaint it should be about something specific, so please let us know:-

- what has gone wrong, giving us as much detail as possible because it helps us to understand the situation better;
- how it has affected you; and
- what you would like us to do to put things right.

We want to ensure the process for making a complaint is clear and simple. Putting your complaint in writing is a more effective way of making sure we understand the details and what you would like us to do to put matters right. Please send your complaint in the first instance to:-

HCC Admin Complaints  
Harrogate Convention Centre  
Springfield House  
Harrogate  
HG1 5LA

Or alternatively email: [admin@harrogateconventioncentre.co.uk](mailto:admin@harrogateconventioncentre.co.uk)

Your complaint will be recorded and either dealt with by Harrogate Convention Centre or sent to the person responsible ie Harrogate Theatre, Organiser etc. If the complaint is about an external organiser it will be forwarded to the Organiser who will keep HCC informed of the outcome. Once the complaint has been dealt with it will be recorded on the log and sent to you. If you are happy with the response, the complaint will be signed off by HCC Head of Operations.

### **Our complaints procedure**

Our procedure seeks to resolve customer dissatisfaction as close as possible to the point of service delivery and to conduct thorough and fair investigation of customer complaints.

### **Service resolution**

If you speak to us about your complaint, we will try to resolve it on the spot. We will confirm with you what the problem is and how you would like it to be resolved. We will try to solve the problem promptly without undue delay and will respond to you **within 10 working days**.

We will check to see if you are satisfied with the resolution. If you are not happy with the initial response, you can ask to move to our formal complaints procedure, which has two stages:-

## **Stage 1 – Local Investigation and Resolution**

The manager of the service about which you complain will look into and explain the reasons behind the decisions and actions.

We aim to acknowledge your complaint **within 5 working days of receiving it and give you a full response within 10 working days.**

If you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint then you can request, within 28 days of the stage 1 response, that the complaint is escalated to a Stage 2 complaint, stating the reasons why you feel your complaint has not been addressed. If we don't hear from you within 28 days, we will consider your complaint closed.

If the complaint has not been resolved under Stage 1, or you are unhappy with the outcome then you can request that a Stage 2 investigation is undertaken.

## **Stage 2 – Corporate Investigation and Resolution**

Stage 2 is a request for a corporate investigation. It is a comprehensive consideration of the complaint by a senior officer appointed by the Chief Executive to carry out the investigation. That senior officer will be from a different service area to the one about which you complain. The outcome will be a formal written report of the investigation. As with the Stage 1, we will acknowledge your concerns within 5 working days. We will then complete the further investigation and reply, normally **within 20 working days of our acknowledgement.**

We aim to complete all complaints within the timescales above; however, if a complaint is very complex it may be necessary to extend the time limit. We will tell you as soon as we know if there is a delay in replying to you. This delay will not exceed 10 working days without good reason and if an extension beyond 20 working days is required to respond to the complaint fully this will be agreed with you.

## **How you can help us**

We understand that it is frustrating when we do not meet your expectations. We will do everything we can to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction. In return, we ask that you:-

- treat our staff with respect;
- do not use abusive language or behaviour when dealing with us;
- comply with all reasonable requests made to resolve your concerns.

On the rare occasion when a customer makes a complaint in an unreasonable way: repeatedly, obsessively or aggressively, for example, we will write to them explaining what action we are taking to bring the matter to an end.

### **Privacy Policy - your personal information**

HCC supports the objectives of the Data Protection Act 1998 and is registered as a data processor. If you use our complaints procedure, you are agreeing that we can use any personal information you send us for purposes connected with your complaint.

We may also give your personal information to other people and organisations if we have to do so by law or if you have given us permission.

### **Equality and Reasonable Adjustments**

HCC is committed to ensuring that all our services are available to all service users in line with the principles of equality and fairness. and that all service users are treated with fairness, dignity and respect. Our aim is to make our complaints policy easy to use and accessible for everyone. We will take steps to make any reasonable adjustments needed to access this policy, or any requests to provide responses in other formats.

### **Equalities statement – Harrogate Convention Centre**

We are committed to achieving our Public Sector Equality Duty, as set out in the Equality Act 2010, and we recognise that there will be occasions where a reasonable adjustment is needed to adapt normal policies, procedures or processes to accommodate an individual's needs so that all customers can access services without barriers.

We will take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people. It is not possible to set out all these adjustments in writing; however, we have published information on our activities to [demonstrate our compliance](#) with our Public Sector Equality Duty.

We can also offer, or help you access, support to help make a complaint and to understand a decision or complaint response.

### **Fluency Duty**

Public authorities are subject to the fluency duty whereby all staff in customer-facing roles must speak fluent English. This includes the ability to speak with confidence and accuracy, using appropriate sentence structures and vocabulary, and understanding customer needs and responding clearly.

To make a complaint under the Fluency Duty Code of Conduct, you should use our complaints procedure.

For the purposes of the fluency duty, a legitimate complaint is one about the standard of spoken English of a public sector member of staff in a customer-facing role. It will be made by a member of the public or someone acting on their behalf, complaining that HCC has not met the fluency duty.

A complaint about a member of staff's accent, dialect, manner or tone of communication, origin or nationality would not be considered a legitimate complaint about the fluency duty.

***What if you want to leave a compliment about a service or have feedback or a concern but do not want to make a formal complaint?***

Sometimes you might want to compliment a service or let us know of something that you are concerned about, but do not want to make a formal complaint.

You can leave a compliment or tell us about your feedback or concern either by sending to the HCC Admin, Harrogate Convention Centre, Springfield House, Harrogate HG1 5LA or email [admin@harrogateconventioncentre.co.uk](mailto:admin@harrogateconventioncentre.co.uk). Your feedback will be passed to a service manager to look into. If you would like us to get back to you about your concern, please tell us when you contact us.